

**United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
National Human Resources Management Center
Denver Federal Center, Building 50
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, Colorado 80225-0047**

In Reply Refer To:
1112 (HR-240)P

August 3, 1999

EMS Transmission

Information Bulletin HR-99-116

To: State/Center Directors; Associate State Directors; and All Field Officials

From: Bureau Safety Manager

Subject: Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome

This memorandum supersedes IB No. SC-94-132, Subject: Hantavirus, Dated March 8, 1994

Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) is caused by exposure to rodent excreta (most usually the deer mouse), including urine, feces or saliva. It causes flu-like symptoms that turn into severe respiratory distress and can be deadly if not treated in a timely manner. HPS was first discovered in the Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah four-corners area, but have been found in 25 of the 50 states.

New research and discoveries make issuing definitive guidance on Hantavirus prevention very difficult. By the time an update is issued, it is liable to be out-of-date. However, the following general principles should be adhered to for the prevention of HPS:

Generally speaking, most HPS infections are caused by inhalation of dry rodent excreta.

1. Avoid inhalation of dust or causing conditions that allow dust to become airborne. The cheap "dust masks" that can be purchased off-the-shelf at hardware stores are not adequate to prevent inhalation of dust containing Hantavirus.

2. When working in cabins or outbuildings that have been closed up or laid away for any significant period of time, open the building and let it air out prior to cleaning.

3. Wear latex gloves when cleaning potentially contaminated areas.

4. **Never** dry sweep or dust any location that may possibly contain rodent excreta (urine, feces, or saliva). Use a wet mop or sponge to clean up these areas.

5. The wet cleaning solution should contain 10% household bleach as a disinfectant (1-1/2 cups of bleach to 1 gal. of water).

6. Mops, sponges, rags, etc. that have been used to clean areas that have the possibility of containing rodent excreta should either be disposed of in a safe manner or stored wet, in a disinfectant solution. Do not allow them to dry out.

Up-to-date, detailed information about Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome, including how to safely clean potentially contaminated areas and prevention methods can be found at the CDC web site. To reach this site, log onto the Bureau Safety Office web site at:

<http://ncweb.sc.blm.gov/safety>

Click on the CDC Hantavirus hot button in the “What’s New” section.

There is also some limited information available from the DOI *Safetynet* web site:

www.safetynet.smis.doi.gov

If you have questions regarding this memorandum, call Dick King, Program Safety Manager, at (303) 236-9423.

Signed by:
Bruce C. Prater
Bureau Safety Manager

Authenticated by:
Brenda Garcia
Staff Assistant

Distribution
RS-150A, BLM Library
NI-101, Reading File
HR-200, Reading File
HR-240